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Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner on...

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Don't Let Him!

[From the parashah sheet "Mayanei Ha-Yeshua #339 – Parashat Vayakel 5768]

Don't let him abuse you. Whether you are a girl, a young woman or a woman – don't let him. Whether you are single or married – don't let him. Not verbally, not with "light" abuse and not with severe abuse. Do not freeze in place. Yell out loud so that everyone can hear you. If he touches you, slap him. If he tries to do worse and there is no choice – kill him. Yes, kill him. And it happened – a disgusting man burst into a young woman's apartment and wanted to have his way with her, and she killed him. Based on the law that it is permissible to use reasonable force to protect oneself, the court of the State of Israel ruled that her reaction was certainly reasonable.

Don't let a man consider you as an object for his use and benefit. No, you are a person. If it has already happened to you, please turn to the police. Don't worry. Don't be embarrassed. You have nothing to be embarrassed about. He should be embarrassed. He is disgusting. Also, do not yield to pressure such as: "This will destroy the connection between him and his wife!" – Let it be destroyed! But it is okay to destroy you?? After he is rehabilitated, his relationship will be rehabilitated. Or: "This will destroy his high standing, since he is a respected person!" – Let it be destroyed! He is not a respectable person! He is foul! And if he is from your family and they begin to emotionally press you: "You would do this to your uncle? Or to your brother? Your grandfather? Your father?" Yes! You should certainly do this to them and it is a great act of righteousness which will have the effect of saving two

things. Saving all of the future girls and young women who would suffer from him and saving this man from additional sins.

There are too many cases of abuse. Obviously, even one case is too much, but there are much more than just one. According to the estimates of women's organization in Israel, during the last year there were 50,000 cases of harassment against women ages 25-40. You can add to this number the girls who are too young or the women who were too old and were not included in the report as well as many others who were embarrassed to make a complaint. A new study shows that 25% of religious women were subject to abuse to varying degrees. This is the same percentage as the general population.

A majority of the abuses were committed by people known to the women: Relatives (30%) or friends (40%) or teachers. The overwhelming majority of women who were abused (65%) do not tell a man. Only 15% tell their mothers and 6% tell their fathers. A girl or young woman who has been abused and does not relate it will walk around with a terrible wound – a guarded secret – she will be sad, fearful and racked with feelings of guilt – without justification.

I therefore suggest putting 50,000 men in prison so that others will hear, see, fear and will no longer act evilly. They will realize that when a woman says "no" – it means just that! Even if she does not say "no," one needs only a little intellect to understand that she means no.

Obviously, not all men are like this, most are modest and gentle. And if you are not yet married, do not fear – you will find a gentle and pure man. To our distress, this lowly group exists outside all strata of society: men from high socio-economic standing and low socio-economic standing; Secularists, Religious-Zionists and Charedim (ultra-orthodox); Ashkenazim, Sephardim, Yemenite and Ethiopian. It is logical that the evil inclination is not racist, choosy and does not have a political affiliation.

Don't let him. Don't be afraid. Even if it is in the work place – don't be afraid. Even if it involves a superior – don't be afraid. The many women's organizations will gladly help you, guide you and advise you. You will not be alone.

If you identify that this has happened to friends, encourage them to talk to you. If you are a teacher, please speak to your students about this and encourage them to speak to you privately. And if you work with the young, encourage them to confide in you.

But prepare yourself spiritually, since the harasser will not give in easily. He will say that you asked for it, initiated it, enticed and seduced him with provocative clothing, etc... Don't worry, however, women's group will help you through it.

The essential thing is that you should not feel guilt, you did nothing wrong. He is guilty and you are pure. If something happened to you in your youth, this will not affect you from marrying a pure and good young man. You are completely fine, you are pure.